

2025 OMAA Fall Workshop Program Draft 7

Workplaces that Work: Creating Environments People Want to Stay In

Queens Landing Hotel , Niagara-on-the-Lake	
Sunday 19 October 2025	
900—400	Exhibit Hall Setup <i>Imperial Ballroom and Lobby</i>
11am start	Golf Tournament at Royal Niagara <i>Sponsored by Intact Public Entities</i>
1pm start	Niagara Glen Hike & Butterfly Conservatory
330—700	Registration <i>Atrium Lobby</i> <i>sponsored by KPMG</i>
430—800	Exhibit Hall <i>Imperial Ballroom and Lobby</i>
515—600	Aspiring CAOs, Members in Transition, and First Timers Meet Up <i>Emerald Room</i>
600—700	Mix and Mingle <i>Mocktails and Cocktails sponsored by Circular Materials</i>
700	Opening Dinner: Remarks, Awards, and Trivia Challenge <i>Grand Georgian Ballroom</i> <i>sponsored by Hydro One</i>
900	Hospitality Suite Mixed Crokinole Tournament Warm-Up Sponsored by First Ontario Credit Union <i>Emerald Room</i>
Monday 20 October 2025	
700—745	Hike Club Meet up in the lobby and walk a loop including Queen's Royal Park
730—830	Breakfast
730—815	Exhibit Hall <i>Imperial Ballroom and Lobby</i>
800—1030	Registration <i>sponsored by KPMG</i> <i>Atrium Lobby</i>
830—920	Rapid Fire and Inspire 1. Building Municipal Risk Resiliency <i>Shannon Devane, LAS Program Manager</i> 2. Urban Forestry as a Revenue Strategy, <i>Felix Laroche, Jakarta</i> 3. Whitby's Market Model Food Bank, <i>Sarah Klein, DCAO Town of Whitby</i> 4. GruShare, A Municipal Shared Equipment Model. <i>Gregg Furtney, CAO Town of Minto</i> 5. Continuous Improvement Through Practical Digitization, <i>Pamela Nicholson, Government Frameworks</i>
920—1000	The Wheatley Explosion: Lessons in Risk, Response, and Resilience

	A powerful explosion rocked downtown Wheatley in August 2021. Hydrogen sulphide gas leaked from an abandoned well beneath a commercial building, injuring several people and destroying nearby properties. CAO Michael Duben , Deputy CAO Dave Taylor , and Director of Public Works Ryan Brown , Chatham-Kent, will discuss lessons learned around emergency management, legal concerns, and operational issues.
1000—1030	Coffee Break
1030—1130	Keynote: The Power of Purpose: Leading a Life That Aligns with What Matters Most Zahra Al-Harazi It's easy to get caught in the momentum of doing — meeting deadlines, hitting metrics, chasing titles — without ever stopping to ask does this still matter to me? In a world that moves fast and rewards visible achievement, purpose can quietly slip into the background. Zahra invites leaders to pause long enough to reconnect with what they're really building and why it matters. Drawing from her own journey of rebuilding identity, career, and voice, Al-Harazi explores how clarity of purpose isn't just about passion — it's about direction, discipline, and integrity in how we lead.
1130—1135	Greetings from the ADGMQ Mélanie Brisson , Directrice Générale, Ville de Sainte-Julie, and Vice-President, Association des directeurs généraux des municipalités du Québec (ADGMQ)
1135—1140	CAO Employment Guide OMAA and OMHRA have released a second edition of this guidebook to strengthen the relationship between Councils and their CAOs through structured recruitment, clear role definition, fair employment terms, and effective performance reviews. Executive Director Scott Vokey will highlight how the guide provides practical tools and best practices with updated content for Strong Mayor municipalities.
1140—1200	Ontario Municipal Chief Administrative Officer Survey StrategyCorp's annual survey has gathered candid insights from municipal CAOs through confidential interviews since 2016. Stacy Hushion , Vice President, StrategyCorp, will provide a summary of the latest pulse check on the economic, political, and organizational challenges shaping local communities and the leaders navigating them.
1200—120	Refuel & Connect: Lunch, Networking, and Engagement <i>sponsored by MROO</i> Take an extended break to enjoy lunch, catch up on emails, connect with exhibitors, and engage in meaningful conversations with fellow attendees.
120—205	Strategic Support: Elevating the Executive Assistant Role Your Executive Assistant is more than a scheduler—they're a strategic partner. Denise Corry and Brenda Jones from the Town of Huntsville and AAA will explore how to unlock the full potential of the EA role by aligning responsibilities with organizational goals, encouraging professional growth, and building a relationship based on trust and accountability.
205—230	CAO Education and Career Trajectory Report Bayham CAO and MPA Student Thomas Thayer presents the findings on his research into the career/education trajectory of CAOs including how they came to be CAOs, tenure, and factors that have affected their career growth.
230—305	Coffee Break Last chance to fill in your prize ballot
305—335	Floodplain Management and Insurance issues

	When major flood and rainfall events strike the damage is often extensive and requires fast action to minimize risk to life and property. CAO of Conservation Ontario Angela Coleman will discuss lessons learned around emergency management, legal concerns, and current operational issues and pressures that should make us think carefully about major flood and storm events in Ontario.
335—425	Moving On — Life and Career Options After Retirement Retirement from a CAO role doesn't mean the end of meaningful work, leadership, or purpose. This candid, engaging session explores the diverse paths senior municipal leaders have taken after stepping away from full-time service. Don Shropshire will share the rewards and realities of serving as an Interim CAO. Bob Casselman will reflect on the shift to and consideration for full retirement. Janice Baker will discuss contributing at the governance level by being a Board member.
545	Board Bus for Niagara Power Station and Dinner
900	Hospitality Suite Mixed Crokinole Tournament <i>Sponsored by The Geoffrey Pennal Advisory Group</i> <i>Emerald Room</i>
Tuesday 21 October 2025	
800—900	Breakfast @ Tiara
900—920	Honourable Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Graydon Smith
920—925	Prize Draw and Mixed Crokinole Tournament Trophy Presentation <i>OMAA Chair Michael DiLullo</i>
925—1010	Enhancing Municipal Workplace Health: Assessments and Restorations Explore the vital tools used to diagnose and improve organizational health. Learn about different types of workplace assessments—psychosocial risk, conflict resolution, and cultural—and how they help uncover stressors and systemic issues. Stephanie Noël , Workplace Consultant, Noël & Co, will show how workplace restorations involve walking through the key stages: analysis, planning, intervention, and follow-up. Leave with practical insights to foster a healthier, more productive workplace.
1010—1025	Coffee Break
1025—1100	Beyond Compensation: Attracting employees in a competitive market In today's ultra-competitive talent landscape, municipalities must go beyond compensation to attract and retain the workforce they need. Kathleen Jinkerson , VP HR & Total Reward Solutions at The Talent Company will explore how evolving employee expectations around flexibility, purpose, transparency, and growth are shaping attraction strategies in the public sector. Learn how to reframe your employee value proposition and strengthen your organization's position in the labour market—without breaking your budget.
1100—1125	Table-Top Discussion: What are you doing to attract employees? Join your peers in a candid, roundtable-style discussion focused on innovative and practical strategies to attract top talent in today's competitive market. Share what's working in your municipality, learn from others, and leave with a list of fresh ideas to strengthen your recruitment efforts.
1125—1130	Wrap up and Final Prize Draws <i>OMAA Chair Michael DiLullo</i>